

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## **Auckland Lantern Festival marks 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

**Auckland's Chinese Lantern Festival marks its 10th anniversary beginning on Waitangi Day (Friday February 6) in the city's Albert Park.**

The three-day Asian festival will run from February 6 until February 8 and is expected to draw thousands of Aucklanders from all sections of the community to its many attractions including new lanterns, performers from China and food stalls.

It will also celebrate another anniversary - the 20th anniversary of the Auckland-Guangzhou sister city relationship. A spectacular new lantern will be on display, gifted to the people of Auckland to commemorate the anniversary.

The Chinese Lantern Festival was initiated in 2000 by the Asia New Zealand Foundation (then known as the Asia 2000 Foundation) in partnership with Auckland City. It was modelled on lantern festivals in China which mark the Chinese New Year and also the Spring Festival in China.

The Lantern Festival has since become one of the city's iconic cultural events along with the Pasifika Festival, regularly drawing well over 150,000 people over three nights.

It began in the Year of the Dragon, and this year – the Year of the Ox – the festival will have worked its way through ten of the 12 animals of the Chinese zodiac.

This year's performers from China will include the crowd-pleasing Nine Lion Puppet Theatre from Zhejiang Province, last seen at the Lantern Festival in 2002. The 18-person group will be bringing their own highly ornate mobile wooden stage that will feature nine lion puppets suspended below the neck of a stage dragon.

Audiences will also have the rare opportunity to enjoy rod puppeteers from Chengdu in Sichuan Province, mask changing and Wu Opera from Zhejiang.



There will also be craft stalls, martial arts demonstrations, a schools' lantern making competition, fireworks, lion dances, karaoke and many, many other performances put on by local Auckland Chinese community groups. It is an event that will appeal to people of all ages.

For more information, visit [.asianz.org.nz](http://asianz.org.nz) or contact Asia New Zealand Foundation culture director Jennifer King on 027 208 9422 or at [@asianz.org.nz](https://www.instagram.com/asianz.org.nz).

